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III. 72

THE
American Prayer-Book Revisions

OF
1785 AND 1789.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, ON
THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,
OCTOBER 16, 1892,

BY

WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY,
Bishop of Iowa.

DAVENPORT:
EDWARD BORCHERDT, PRINTER.
1893.

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Mr. [illegible]

The American Prayer-Book Revisions of 1785 and 1789.

“There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”—Rev. viii.:3.

It is most fitting that, in connection with the consideration of the “Standard” Prayer Book of 1892, by the General Convention now in session in Baltimore, we should review the liturgical work our fathers did, and note the guiding principles which gave us the Prayer-Book of our first hundred years of life and growth.

Within the walls of Christ Church, Philadelphia, there gathered day after day the Churchmen of 1785 and 1789, debating, first, the changes rendered necessary to make the services “conformable to the principles of the American Revolution and the constitutions of the several States;” and secondly, the further alterations in the Book of Common Prayer which took shape in the “Proposed Book;” and then, in 1789, the practical return to the English Prayer-Book as a model and guide in forming our present book. We may well and wisely review the work thus done. At our entrance upon a second century of autonomous

existence; at the period in our history when the labors of a decade of years and more of liturgical study and legislation have resulted in the adoption of a new standard, we may profitably recall the story of the earlier revisions and consider in the light of a century's experience the measures and men of 1785 and 1789.

A score or more of foolscap sheets, soiled and stained with age, largely in the handwriting of William White, and displaying the cramped, abbreviated style of writing he so uniformly employed, record the "Acts of the convention of 1785." Of these, "The Alterations agreed upon and confirmed in Convention for rendering the Liturgy conformable to the Principles of the American Revolution and the Constitution of the several States," afford us the results of the first attempt of our fathers at a revision of the Book of Common Prayer. It is certainly characteristic of the patriotic White, as well as thoroughly consonant with the environment of the revisers of 1785, that this first American liturgical document should begin with words such as these:

"That in the suffrages, after the Creed, instead of *O Lord, save the King*, be said, *O Lord, bless and preserve these United States.*"

The Churchmen of 1785 were patriots, and the shaping of our services, as we have them in the Book of Common Prayer we have used for a hundred years, was done by the very men who, in the halls of congress or on the field of battle, won for us our independence. It was the first expression of the autonomy of the American Church — this breathing, to the God Who had given us our nationality, of the Church's prayer for the benediction and preservation of the United States!

Following this patriotic aspiration were directions for the omission of the prayers for the reigning family of Great Britain, in the morning and evening services; the omission of the suffrages of the Litany for the king and royal family; and the substitution, in place of the suffrages on behalf of parliament, of the petition, "That it may please Thee to endue the Congress of these United States, and all others in authority, legislative, executive, and judicial, with grace, wisdom, and understanding, to execute justice and to maintain truth." For the Prayer for the High Court of Parliament prescribed in the English Office when the Litany was not read, a Prayer for Congress was set forth. The Collect for the King's Majesty was changed to comprehend "All in authority, legislative, executive, and

judicial, in these United States." The Collects for the King in the Communion Office were omitted, or similarly changed. In the answer in the Catechism to the question, "What is thy duty towards thy neighbor?" the words, "To honor and obey the king," were changed so as to read: "To honour and obey my civil rulers." In place of the observance of November 5th, January 30th, May 29th, and October 25th, a service was appointed "to be used on the Fourth of July, being the anniversary of Independence." In the Forms of Prayer to be used at sea, the "United States of America" took the place of the reference to "our most gracious Sovereign Lord King George and his kingdom," and the word "island" gave place to "country." The words, "O Almighty God, the Sovereign Commander," were omitted; and "the honour of our country" was substituted for "the honour of our sovereign."

These changes were a necessity. At the breaking out of the war, the clergy who continued to use the state prayers in the service were subjected to interruption and insult, and often to personal peril. As the wish for independence took shape in the minds of the people, the clergy were forced to face the problem of ceasing their public ministrations, or of omitting these obnox-

ious prayers. In Christ Church, Philadelphia, the first formal and authoritative change in the services took place, even before its chimes had sounded far and wide, ringing in—responsive to the pealing of the State House bell—the proclamation of liberty to the world. On the Fourth of July, 1776, the vestry of this Church, from among whose worshippers and pew-holders fully half a dozen of the “signers” were furnished, met, and ordered the omission of the prayers for the king and royal family.* The Virginia legislature, by formal vote, took the same step the following day. The vestry of Trinity, Boston, on the receipt of the news of the Declaration of Independence, directed their rector—the excellent Parker, afterwards the second Bishop of Massachusetts—to omit the same prayers. Elsewhere this course was followed, either by vestry-vote or in glad recognition of the fact so often asserted by our fathers, and expressed

*Extract from “Minutes of Vestry: March, 1761, to April, 1784,” p. 338: “July 4. At a meeting of Vestry at the Rector’s July 4, 1776. Present, Revd. Jacob Duché, Rector; Thomas Cuthbert, Church Warden; Jacob Duché, James Biddle, Robert Whyte, Peter Dehaven, Charles Redman, James Reynolds, Edmund Physick, Gerardus Clarkson. Whereas, The Hon’ble Continental Congress have resolved to declare the American Colonies to be free and Independent States, in consequence of which it will be proper to omit those Petitions in the Liturgy wherein the King of Great Britain is prayed for as inconsistent with the said Declaration; Therefore, Resolved, That it appears to this Vestry to be necessary for the peace and well-being of the Churches to omit the said Petitions, and the Rector and Assistant Ministers of the United Churches are requested, in the name of the Vestry and their Constituents, to omit such petition as above mentioned.”

in their language in the preface to our book of Common Prayer, that "When, in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included." We may, then, in this connection, seek to emphasize the historic statement that in Christ Church, Philadelphia, and by the formal act of its constituted authorities, the Prayer-Book of our fathers was first adapted to the change in the civil relations of the people, and the freedom of the American Church from the duty of recognizing an alien ruler and a foreign domination first fully asserted to the world. Honor, then, is rightly due to the vestry and people of the united congregations of Christ Church and S. Peter's, who were thus the pioneers in the work of American liturgical revision.

Bishop White tells us that at the assembling of the Convention of 1785 in Christ Church, Philadelphia, few if any of the delegates contemplated other or further changes in the Prayer Book than such as were necessary to make its language conform to the altered condition of civil affairs. The fundamental principles first formulated in White's statesman-like essay on *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*,

and clearly enunciated at the preliminary Convention of 1784—held in New York, and more generally attended than the meetings prior to the second Convention of 1789—expressly limited the alterations of the liturgy to those rendered necessary by the civil independence already secured. In Connecticut and throughout New England, and in fact to a large extent in New York and New Jersey, the clergy and laity deemed themselves incompetent to undertake the revision of the liturgy while destitute of the episcopal order. So widely did this principle obtain that the Assembly of Virginia restrained the clergy by specific enactment from consenting directly or indirectly “to any alterations in the order, government, doctrine, or worship of the Church.” It was but natural, then, that the earliest representative gathering of American Churchmen from the various States laid down as a principle of the Church’s organization, that it “shall maintain the doctrines of the Gospel as now held by the Church of England, and shall adhere to the liturgy of the said Church, as far as shall be consistent with the American Revolution and the constitutions of the respective States.”

Even as late as May, 1785, the Convention of Virginia, untrammelled by the “fun-

damental principles" of the meeting in New York in 1784, gave an unwilling sanction to a review of the Prayer Book, accompanying its assent with the requirement of the continuance of the use of the English book "with such alterations as the American Revolution has rendered necessary."

In the interval between the preliminary meeting of 1784 in New York and the gathering in Christ Church, Philadelphia, of the Convention of 1785, Seabury had been consecrated for Connecticut by the Scottish Bishops, and had been enthusiastically welcomed to his see by the representative Churchmen of New England and New York. At his first Convocation, held a few weeks before the meeting in Philadelphia, in the autumn of 1785, the Bishop of Connecticut, with the Rev. Samuel Parker, of Trinity Church, Boston, afterwards Bishop of Massachusetts; the Rev. Benjamin Moore, afterwards Bishop of New York, and the Rev. Abraham Jarvis, Seabury's successor in the See of Connecticut, gave careful consideration to the matter of Prayer-Book alterations. But their action was confined to the changes deemed necessary to accommodate the Prayer-Book services to the civil constitution. "Should more be done," writes Seabury to White, in giving an account of the Middletown Convocation, "it

must be a work of time and great deliberation." A Convention of the Churches of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, held in September, 1785, ratified the omissions and alterations agreed upon at Middletown, and postponed action on other proposed changes till after the Convocation appointed to meet at New Haven, and the Convention appointed to convene in Philadelphia.

Few more notable gatherings than that assembled in Christ Church, Philadelphia, in September, 1785, are recorded in our ecclesiastical annals. Sixteen clergymen and twenty-one laymen, of whom five clergymen and thirteen laymen were from Pennsylvania and one clergyman and six laymen from Delaware, formed this body, which organized under the presidency of William White, with the Rev. David Griffith, of Virginia, Washington's friend and rector, as secretary. It is safe to assert that whatever may have been the results of this meeting, the rector and representatives of Christ Church, Philadelphia, certainly shaped its measures and largely influenced its decisions. Within these very walls consecrated to Church and country, where, a year before, the first ecclesiastical convention or council composed of laymen as well as clergymen had convened, it was fitting

that the organization of the Church at large should be attempted. In this venerable Church, after deliberations and discussions occupying the careful thought and the earnest prayer of some of the foremost men of the time in Church and State, the foundations of the autonomous American Church were laid broad and deep. On these foundations was wisely, firmly, prayerfully, built the City of our God. Of these shapely stones was erected the fair structure, compactly fashioned, of the American Church. Within Christ Church walls, and under the overarching roof of this sacred temple, the corner-stone of our ecclesiastical system was laid.

The Convention of 1785 ratified and adopted the alterations of which we have already spoken as required by the changed conditions of civil affairs. But while this was the limit of its liturgical revision, so far as any formal or authoritative legislation was concerned, the Convention at the very outset assigned to the committee appointed to report the alterations contemplated by the fourth fundamental principle adopted by the New York meeting in 1784, the consideration of "such further alterations in the liturgy as may be advisable for this Convention to recommend to the consideration of the Church here repre-

sented." The names of this committee are those of the leading Churchmen of the time. The clergymen were Provoost, of New York, afterwards bishop; Abraham Beach, of New Jersey, one of the earliest to move in the matter of the organization of the American Church; White, of Pennsylvania, whose duties as president of the Convention practically prevented his service on the committee; Wharton, of Delaware, the first convert to the American Church from the Roman obedience; William Smith, removed from the charge of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, and now President of Washington College, Chestertown, Md., and Bishop-elect of the Church in that State; Griffith, afterwards Bishop-elect of Virginia; and Purcell, a brilliant but erratic clergyman of South Carolina. Of the laity there were the Hon. James Duane, of New York, a patriot and statesman; Patrick Dennis, of New Jersey, a man of character and note; Richard Peters, of Pennsylvania, a scholar, a jurist, and a vestryman of Christ Church; James Sykes, of Delaware, who had won distinction in the war; Dr. Thomas Craddock, of Maryland, a man of high character and wide influence; John Page, one of Virginia's most noted sons; and the Hon. Jacob Read, of South Carolina, a leading patriot and publicist of his native State.

The pages of the journal contain little information as to the debates in committee or in Convention attending the preparation of what is known in liturgical history as the "Proposed Book." Bishop White, in his *Memoirs of the Church*, adds but brief details to the scanty information which may be gathered incidentally from the manuscript memoranda and the unpublished or printed correspondence of the time. The changes finally agreed upon, comprising a thorough review of the Liturgy and Articles of Religion, were "proposed and recommended" for adoption at a subsequent Convention. The alterations were reported to the committee we have named, by a sub-committee, of which the Rev. Dr. William Smith was the leading spirit. We have the testimony of Bishop White that they were not reconsidered in the committee to which they were reported, and that even on their presentation in Convention "there were but few points canvassed with any material difference of opinion." They were chiefly the work of the Rev. Dr. William Smith, whose preëminent part in this task of revision received the grateful acknowledgments of the Convention. To him, in connection with the Rev. Drs. White and Wharton, the publication of the Proposed Book was assigned. A

wide liberty in the matter of further emendations or corrections was entrusted to, or certainly exercised by, the committee; and the published correspondence of the committee, carefully preserved by Dr. Smith and issued within the last few years by authority of the General Convention, is the chief source of our knowledge of the principles guiding the proposed revision.

With only marginal notices of omissions and additions which had been approved, correcting in manuscript the English books already in use, and with the manuscript schedule of changes suggested and proposed — a document still extant, and in its cramped chirography, with all its interlineations, corrections, erasures, fac-similed as one of our earliest liturgical authorities — the Convention, as a body, concluded its work of revision. There was no time or opportunity for putting these changes authoritatively in print; still, the *Daily Morning Service*, as proposed by the committee, was used on the closing day of the Convention. The journal records, under date of Friday, October 7, 1785, as follows: "The Convention met according to adjournment, and attended Divine Service in Christ Church; when the Liturgy, as altered, was read by the Rev. Dr. White, and a suitable sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr.

Smith, after which the Convention adjourned," etc. For this sermon Dr. Smith received the thanks of the Convention. In referring to the work of revision, he alludes to the work of the Convention as that "of taking up our Liturgy or Public Service where our former venerable reformers had been obliged to leave it; and of *proposing* to the Church at large such further alterations and improvements as the length of time, the progress in manners and civilization, the increase and diffusion of charity and toleration among all Christian denominations, and other circumstances (some of them peculiar to our situation among the highways and hedges of this new world), seem to have rendered absolutely necessary."*

* In this hasty revision, additional sentences were prefixed to the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer; the word *Absolution* was omitted from the rubrics in the daily Office; grammatical changes were made in the Lord's Prayer; the use of the *Gloria Patri* was limited to its recital at the end of the "Reading Psalms;" in the *Te Deum* in place of "honourable" was substituted "adorable, true, and only Son," and for the phrase "didst not abhor the Virgin's womb" was inserted "didst humble Thyself to be born of a pure Virgin;" the choice of Psalms and Lessons was left at the discretion of the Minister; in the Apostle's Creed the article, "He descended into hell," was omitted; the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds were omitted; the suffrages after the bidding to prayer were abbreviated; the lesser Litany was shortened; for archaic words modern equivalents were substituted; verbal changes were made in the Offices; parents were allowed to be sponsors; the omission of the sign of the cross in Baptism, when particularly desired, was authorized; the phrases "I plight thee my troth," and "with my body I thee worship," and "pledged their troth either to other," in the Marriage Service, were omitted; in the Burial Office the restriction as to the use of the service in the case of those unbaptized was removed; the form of absolution in the Visitation Office was omitted, and the "declaration" in the daily offices substituted in its place. a

The Proposed Book, after many and vexatious delays, at length appeared in print. Its reception, complete and in binding, is recorded by Dr. Smith in a letter addressed to Dr. White under date of April 29, 1786. Its publication awakened no enthusiasm, and it was soon evident, to quote the testimony of Bishop White, "that, in regard to the Liturgy, the labors of the Convention

form of Prayer, etc., for prisoners, agreed upon by the Irish Archbishops and Bishops and Clergy in 1711, was adopted with modifications, such as the substitution of the "declaration" for the Absolution, and the omission of the short collect "O Saviour of the world," etc.; in the Catechism the reply to the question, "When did you receive this name?" was changed as follows: "I received it in Baptism, whereby I became a member of the Christian Church;" instead of the words "verily, and indeed taken," in the explanation of the Sacraments, was substituted the phrase "spiritually taken;" the number of the Sacraments was expressly limited to "two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper;" a special prayer was inserted to be used after the General Thanksgiving instead of the service for the Churching of women; the Communion Office was omitted, the three collects being placed among the occasional prayers; twenty only of the XXXIX Articles were retained, and these were pruned and modified in their language; for the Psalter there were inserted Selections arranged for the morning and evening services for thirty days; some of the Psalms were wholly omitted, and others considerably abbreviated, the design being to obviate the necessity for the use of the "imprecatory" passages; a service was prepared for the Fourth of July; eighty-four selections of Psalms in Metre were added, and fifty-one hymns. Four leaves of tunes with the notes engraved were added at the close of the work. The title of this rare volume, of which four thousand copies were issued, but of which only a few still exist, is as follows: "THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, And Administration of the SACRAMENTS, And other RITES and CEREMONIES, As revised and proposed to the Use of The Protestant Episcopal CHURCH, At a Convention of the said CHURCH in the States of New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, And South Carolina, Held in Philadelphia, from September 27th to October 7th, 1785. PHILADELPHIA: Printed by HALL and SELLERS: MDCCLXXXVI." This work was reprinted in London in 1789, and was highly praised in a critical notice in the Monthly Review (vol. 80, p. 337). It was reprinted in the Rev. Peter Hall's *Reliquiæ Liturgicæ*, and within the last few years it has been issued again and again as one of the documents of the "Reformed Episcopal Church." The original is one of the earliest as well as rarest of the Ecclesiastical "Americana" of the period.

had not reached their object." Even the committee entrusted with the preparation of the volume for the press felt and confessed the imperfection of their work. "We can only, in the different States," writes Dr. William Smith to the Rev. Dr. Parker, of Massachusetts, under date of April 17. 1786, "receive the book for temporary use till our Churches are organized and the book comes again under review of Conventions having their bishops, etc., as the primitive rules of Episcopacy require." South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania proposed amendments to the committee's work. No Convention met in Delaware, and consequently no action respecting the book was taken. New Jersey formally rejected the proposed revision and memorialized the General Convention of 1786 with respect to "the unseasonableness and irregularity" of the alterations made by the committee of publication without the "revision and express approbation of the Convention itself." The Convention of New York postponed the question of ratification of the Proposed Book "out of respect to the English bishops, and because the minds of the people are not yet sufficiently informed." The prospect of the success of the efforts of the Convention of 1785, for securing the Episcopate in the

English line of succession, served materially to hinder the ratification and general use of the Proposed Book. The objections urged by Bishop Seabury and the New England Churchmen to its adoption seemed cogent and convincing when echoed by the English archbishops and bishops. Some of the most glaring defects in this hasty and ill-considered revision were obviated by the action of the Wilmington Convention of 1786. The mutilation of the Apostles' Creed, and the rejection of the Nicene Symbol, were now no longer insisted upon. The omitted clause, "He descended into hell," was restored to the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed was replaced in the Daily Offices. The temper of the times was becoming conservative. Catholic truth as held by Seabury and the Churchmen at the North was no longer decried. The crudity and incompleteness of the proposed revision was confessed by all. It practically died in the effort that gave it birth.

The action of the Wilmington Convention in removing the objections of the English archbishops and bishops to imparting the succession to the American Church sealed the fate of the Proposed Book. Its use had never been general, and in all but a few Churches it was now forever laid aside. In New England, its adoption by

Trinity Church, Boston, was only temporary. At Trinity, Newport, R. I., the attempt to introduce it, we are told by Bishop Seabury, was productive of consequences that threatened the very life of the parish. Connecticut never admitted its use in any of its Churches, and in New York the influence of Provost was insufficient to secure its general introduction. It was used for a time in Christ Church, as in numerous Churches in the Middle and Southern States, but its omissions and alterations were generally distasteful, and it was, in all cases, after a brief time laid aside. The clergy returned to the use of their old office-books, the changes being noted in manuscript, as in the case of the Christ Church prayer books of the day, still religiously preserved, and showing the alterations made to render the service conformable to our civil independence and the constitutions of the independent States*

* On the eve of the Convention of 1789, under date of June 20 that year, Bishop Seabury gave fully and without reserve his criticism on the Proposed Book to his Episcopal brother of Pennsylvania :

" Was it not that it would run this letter to an unreasonable length, I would take the liberty to mention at large the objections here made to the Prayer Book published in Philadelphia. I will confine myself to a few, and even these I should not mention but from a hope they will be obviated by your Convention. The mutilating the Psalms is supposed to be an unwarrantable liberty, and such as was never before taken with Holy Scriptures by any Church. It destroys that beautiful chain of prophecy that runs through them, and turns their application from Messiah and the Church to the temporal state and concerns of individuals. By discarding the word Absolution, and making *no mention of Regeneration in Baptism*, you appear to give up

In 1789 the General Convention of the Churches in the Middle and Southern States again convened in Christ Church, Philadelphia, but the desire for unity dominated in every mind the wish for liturgical changes or omissions. To the episcopate of Seabury, secured in 1784 from the Catholic remainder of the Church in Scotland, had been added the English succession conferred on White and Provoost at Lam-

those points, and to open the door to error and delusion. The excluding of the Nicene and Athanasian Creed has alarmed the steady friends of our Church, lest the doctrine of Christ's divinity should go out with them. If the doctrine of those Creeds be offensive, we are sorry for it, and shall hold ourselves so much the more bound to retain them. If what are called the damnable clauses in the latter be the objection, cannot these clauses be supported by Scripture? Whether they can or cannot, why not discard those clauses and retain the doctrinal part of the Creed? The leaving out *the descent into Hell* from the Apostles' Creed seems to be of dangerous consequence. Have we a right to alter the analogy of faith handed down to us by the Holy Catholic Church? And if we do alter it, how will it appear that we are the same Church which subsisted in primitive times? The article of *the descent*, I suppose, was put into the Creed to ascertain Christ's perfect humanity, that he had a human soul, in opposition to those heretics who denied it and affirmed that His body was actuated by the Divinity. For if when he died, and his body was laid in the grave, his soul went to the place of departed spirits, then he had a human soul as well as body, and was very and perfect man. The Apostles' Creed seems to have been the Creed of the Western Church; the Nicene of the Eastern; and the Athanasian to be designed to ascertain the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity against all opposers. And it always appeared to me, that the design of the Church of England, in retaining the three Creeds, was to show that she did retain this analogy of the Catholic faith, in common with the Eastern and Western Church, and in opposition to those who denied the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence. Why any departures should be made from this good and pious example I am yet to seek.

"There seems in your book a dissonance between the Offices of Baptism and Confirmation. In the latter there is a renewal of a vow, which in the former does not appear to have been explicitly made. Something of the same discordance appears in the Catechism.

"Our regard for primitive practice makes us exceedingly grieved that you have not absolutely retained the sign of the

beth in 1787. The Churches of the New-England States recognized Seabury as their head. The Churches of the Middle States and those at the southward were united in their acceptance of the episcopate as received from the Mother Church of England. To bring together the long-parted and oft-times contending Churchmen of the North and South was the desire of well-nigh every heart. Through the mediatorial offices of

Cross in Baptism. When I consider the practice of the ancient Church, before Popery had a being, I cannot think the Church of England justifiable in giving up the Sign of the Cross, where it was retained by the first Prayer Book of Edward the VI. Her motive may have been good; but good motives will not justify wrong actions. The concessions she has made in giving up several primitive, and I suppose, apostolical usages, to gratify the humours of fault-finding men, shows the inefficacy of such conduct. She has learned wisdom from her experiences. Why should not we also take a lesson in her school? If the humour be pursued of giving up points on every demand, in fifty years we shall scarce have the name of Christianity left. For God's sake, my dear sir, let us remember that it is the particular business of the Bishops of Christ's Church to preserve it pure and undefiled, in faith and practice, according to the model left by apostolic practice. And may God give you grace and courage to act accordingly!

"In your Burial Office, the hope of a future resurrection to eternal life is too faintly expressed, and the acknowledgment of an intermediate state, between death and the resurrection, seems to be entirely thrown out; though, that this was a Catholic, primitive, and apostolic doctrine, will be denied by none who attend to this point. The Articles seem to be altered to little purpose. The doctrines are neither more clearly expressed nor better guarded; nor are the objections to the old Articles obviated. And, indeed, this seems to have been the case with several other alterations: they appear to have been made for alteration's sake, and at least have not mended the matter they aimed at. That the most exceptionable part of the English book is the Communion Office may be proved by a number of very respectable names among her clergy. The grand fault in that Office is the deficiency of a more formal Oblation of the Elements, and of the Invocation of the Holy Ghost to sanctify and bless them. The Consecration is made to consist merely in the Priest's laying his hands on the elements and pronouncing. "*This is my Body*," etc., which words are not consecration at all, nor were they addressed by Christ to the Father, but were *declarative* to the Apostles. This is so exactly symbolizing with

Parker of Massachusetts—seconding and furthering measures recommended and approved, if not first suggested, by William White—this blessed union and comprehension were happily effected. The steps taken at the first Convention of 1789, held as so many of our noteworthy ecclesiastical assemblies have been from the first, in Christ Church, Philadelphia, resulted, at the second gathering of the Church in Convention in the same place and in the same

the Church of Rome in an error;—an error, too, on which the absurdity of Transubstantiation is built, that nothing but having fallen into the same error themselves, could have prevented the enemies of the Church from casting it in her teeth. The efficacy of Baptism or Confirmation, of Orders, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and His energy is implored for that purpose; and why He should not be invoked in the consecration of the Eucharist, especially as all the old Liturgies are full to the point, I cannot conceive. It is much easier to account for the alterations of the first Liturgy of Edward the VI., than to justify them; and as I have been told, there is a vote on the minutes of your Convention, *anno*. 1786, I believe, for the revision of this matter, I hope it will be taken up, and that God will raise up some able and worthy advocate for this primitive practice, and make you and the Convention the instruments of restoring it to His Church in America. It would do you more honour in the world, and contribute more to the union of the Churches than any other alterations you can make, and would restore the Holy Eucharist to its ancient dignity and efficacy. . . .

"Hoping that all obstructions may be removed by your Convention, and beseeching Almighty God to direct us in this great work of establishing and building up His Church in peace and unity, truth and charity, and purity.

"I remain with great regard and esteem,

"Your affectionate Brother and very humble servant,

"SAMUEL, Bp. Connect." *a*

No more able or convincing arguments could have been prepared. The words of Seabury in this *critique* are worthy of the closest reading, the most careful consideration. They give us in calm and temperate language the plea of the New England Churches and their spiritual head for the primitive faith and order and the Catholic use.

a First printed in Perry's *Hist. Notes and Documents*, forming Vol. III. of *The Reprint of the Early Journals*, 1785-1835.

year, in the welcoming of Seabury and the New England deputies to what was now in its fullest, truest sense a *General Convention* of the Church in the United States. In the State House, in the apartments of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to which the Convention had adjourned the day before, on Friday, October 2, 1789; by the signing of the amended Constitution, changed with this end in view, by Seabury and the New England deputies, the American Church was at length at unity in herself.

The revision of the Litany was now a primary duty. The Proposed Book does appear as a factor in the revision of 1789, which gave us the Prayer Book we now, after a century's use, lay aside for the standard of 1892.† The New England

† Bishop White had written to Seabury, under date of May 21, 1787, that "if it should be thought advisable by ye general body or our Church to adhere to ye English Book of Common Prayer (ye political parts excepted), I shall be one of ye first, after ye appearance of such a disposition, to comply with it most punctually. Further than this, if it should seem ye most probable way of maintaining an agreement among ourselves, I shall use my best endeavors to effect it. At ye same time, I must candidly express my opinion, that ye review of ye Liturgy would tend very much to ye satisfaction of most of ye members of our communion, and to its future success and prosperity. The worst evil which I apprehend from a refusal to review is this: that it will give a great advantage to those who wish to carry ye alterations into essential points of doctrine. Reviewed it will unquestionably be in some places, and ye only way to prevent its being done by men of ye above description is ye taking it up as a general business."

Seabury had written to Parker of Boston, under date of February 13, 1788, "I never thought there was any heterodoxy in the Southern Prayer Book, but I do think the true doctrine is left too unguarded, and that the Officers are - some of them - low-

deputies, under the lead of Dr. Parker of Massachusetts, who voiced the views and wishes of Seabury, "proposed that the English book should be the ground of the proceedings held without any reference to that proposed and set out in 1785." Others contended that a liturgy should be framed *de novo*, "without any reference to any existing book, although with liberty to take from any, whatever the Convention should think fit." The result of this discussion, so far as the House of Deputies was concerned, is seen in "the wording of the resolves as they stand in the Journal, in which the different committees are appointed, to prepare a Morning and Evening Prayer, to prepare a Litany, to prepare a Communion Service," and the same in regard to the other offices of the Prayer Book. The phraseology employed in 1785 was to *alter* the services respectively. The latitude this change of action of the House of Deputies seemed to justify, was essentially modified by the general disposition of the Convention to vary the new book as little as possible from the English model, and the further circumstance that the House

ered to such a degree, that they will, in a great measure, lose their influence."

It was, therefore, with the full approval of the men who certainly occupied representative positions in the Churches, both of the Northern, the Middle, and the Southern States, that the "Proposed Book" was laid upon the shelf at the meeting in 1789.

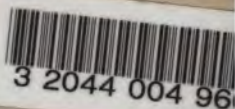
of Bishops “adopted a contrary course.”

To this House of Bishops, meeting in the committee-room of the House of Assembly; and later, when “the public service” required the use of the apartment, in the apparatus-room of the College of Philadelphia; after divine service each day in Christ Church or at the College Chapel; and consisting of Seabury as Presiding Bishop, and William White — Provoost being absent — is due much of the conservatism and Catholicity of the revision of 1789 as contrasted with the abortive attempt of 1785. The alterations, other than those of a political nature which had been earlier agreed upon, were mainly verbal, with the omission of repetitions. Additions were made to the Occasional Prayers; Selections of Psalms were inserted; and an Office for the Visitation of Prisoners, from the Irish Prayer Book, was added. A Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving for the Fruits of the Earth was adopted — thus, first of all Christian bodies in this land, nationalizing the Thanksgiving observance. Forms of Prayer for Family Use, condensed from those of Bishop Gibson, were inserted. Besides these changes, Bishop Seabury secured the restoration to the Prayer of Consecration in the Holy Communion Office of *the Oblation* and Invocation found in King

Edward VI.'s first Prayer Book and retained in the Scotch Office.

In this notable improvement of the Liturgy, Seabury secured for the American revision of 1789 a closer conformity in the Eucharistic Office to primitive models, and fully met the requirement of the *Concordat* he had signed with the Scottish bishops on his elevation to the episcopate.

It is thus that there came down to us from the primitive days the prayers of the saints in the form and manner we have used them at our public devotions for a hundred years. Ours is the heritage of prayer coming from the historic past, and the very history of revisions and changes has an interest and value all will admit. "The prayers of my mother the Church," cried the dying George Herbert, "there are no prayers like hers." And we, conscious of what was secured to us by the men and measures of 1789, may thank God for the gift to us of that incomparable book of devotion which, with the slight changes and enrichments of our own revision, will, we fondly believe, be to us in the years to come what our fathers' book of 1789 has been to us for the first century of our independent life. For the revision of 1789—both for what it was and for what it superseded—we may ever thank our own and our fathers' God.



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